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ABSTRACT

A set of materials for independent study of Arabic is designed for Peace Corps volunteers working in Oman and Yemen who have had Arabic language training but need additional skills. It establishes guidelines for independent study and working with a tutor, helps check language performance, and provides grammatical information for reference. The materials begin with a brief history of Arabic and a discussion of the language's different forms and dialects. Subsequent chapters address issues: (1) obtaining appropriate learning materials; (2) getting speaking and conversational practice; (3) taking notes and doing homework; (4) continuing study in reading and writing; (5) finding and working with a tutor; (6) the structural, phonological, and geographic differences in Arabic dialects; and (7) basic grammatical forms and structures. The text is in English with some Arabic examples. (MSE)

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A FIELD GUIDE FOR CONTINUED STUDY OF

THE ARABIC LANGUAGE IN YEMEN AND OMAN

David Lawrence Critchfield

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INTRODUCTION

Hollywood, California 1972

The scene is a Lebanese restaurant in a large American city. John Wayne sits across the table from an attractive female who's sipping an exotic drink. The waiter approaches the table. John turns his head and orders the food in fluent Arabic. His female companion remarks: "my, but you do speak Arabic well". John replies, "Oh, it's just something I picked up when I was working in the oil fields."

We unfortunately all aren't John Waynes when it comes to language acquisition. In fact, very few people are. The belief that language "rubs off" like white wash or is "picked up" like a newspaper from the porch couldn't be farther from the truth. Although there is a bit of innate ability and luck involved in learning a new tongue, study and practice do the most to develop a language skill.

This book has come in to being in response to a lack of post-training language materials for Oman and Yemen. There seems to be a very real need for a "self-guided tour" of the language learning maze which will supplement material covered in basic training courses.

Perhaps in part due to a lack of availabile study materials, trainings' end has often been the climax of language aquisition for many volunteers. Some just give up for a variety of reasons; the cultural change was too draining, or they had no idea as to where to start so they just didn't bother. Most go on to learn a few more "key" phrases about their jobs before calling it quits, but only very few ever really achieve a solid working knowledge of the local language. It is a well documented fact that many volunteers speak Arabic better at training's end than at the conclusion of their service.

It is hoped that this book may do something towards remedying that situation. It's a start.

This book attempts to do several things; to establish guidelines for self-study and working with a tutor, to help you check your language performance and to offer grammatical reference material necessary to learning to speak the language correctly. Each chapter addresses itself to a particular area of concern for the new learner.

At this point you may have little idea of how fortunate you are to be able to learn something as useful as Arabic. It is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. Your Arabic ability will be an asset throughout a great part of the world, on all the major continents.

HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE

Arab historians claim that Arabic as we know it today was developed in the sixth century by beduin poets singing to the tribes of Northern Arabia. Although the beduins were completely illiterate, they managed to develop a language of amazing richness and exactitude.

Pre-islamic literature, scribbled on date palm frond for lack of paper, reflected images of desert life; nature, hunting, love and war. Poets played with the natural rhythm that existed in their language based upon a three-letter root. By the addition of certain vowels and consonants, roots were modified in predictable ways for different shades of meaning. Whole word families were created around single roots.

The prophet Mohammed was the first individual to develop a prose style in the Arabic language, and the Koran is the first document of Arabic prose literature. The Koran, still retaining some of the imagery of pre-islamic poetry, was for hundreds of years nearly the only piece of printed material known to many Arabs. Up until today in some of the more remote areas of Arabia, the Koran is the only piece of reading material at hand.

During the spread of Islam throughout the Mideast, Asia and North Africa, Arabic became an administrative language, both spoken and written. After the decline of Arab strength, many people who had embraced Islam as their religion retained the Arabic script for their writing, even when speaking other languages. Throughout the Arab world the "Classical Arabic" script in which the Koran was written has remained constant, although spoken Arabic has evolved into several different dialects.

Islam forbade the painting or sculpting of actual objects (especially the human form) as a kind of backlash from the days of paganism, so Arab artists turned their talents to calligraphy. Although the development of modern printing facilities reduced the need for calligraphy, it is still widely employed and respected until this day.

Modern European languages have taken many words from Arabic. The English language itself contains many words of Arabic origin; Algebra, from "al-jabar", the title of a book by a ninth century Arab mathematician; Alchemy, from "al-chemia", the Arabic word for chemistry; and Sherbet from the Arabic "shurba" meaning something sweet to drink.

Today over 120 million inhabitants of the Middle East speak Arabic as their mother tongue, and over one-seventh of the world's population relies upon Arabic script for written communication. Millions of people in Africa use the Arabic alphabet. Modern Persian, Urdu (the language of Pakistan) and Daari (the language of Afghanistan) are all written in Arabic script. In addition, Arabic script is used in Indonesia, Malaya, sections of China and southern Russia, and in the Philippines.

Arabic is the national language of all Arab countries, and is widely spoken as a second language in several neighboring Middle Eastern countries. The coasts of Iran and East Africa both have large, Arabic speaking communities.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF ARABIC

In your study of Arabic you'll soon see that all Arabics are not equal. Unlike English in which the spoken and written languages are almost identical, in Arabic they are different. There are, in fact, three different "kinds" of Arabic. The following is a brief description of each.

Classical Arabic

The oldest and most hallowed type of Arabic is called "Classical" and dates from the time of the prophet Mohammed when it was reputedly spoken as dialect. It's archaic and difficult to manipulate by the unskilled modern user. Its relationship to modern day Arabic is similar to old Biblical English's relationship to modern English. Arabs refer to this "Classical" language as the "high" language and respect anyone able to converse in it well. Its modern use is confined mostly to religious situations as it is the language of the Koran. Short voweling and case endings are especially important in Classical Arabic; a far cry from the informality of modern dialects.

For hundreds of years before modern education, Classical Arabic of the Koran was used to teach all children how to read and write. This practice continues today in many places.

Modern Standard Arabic

Modern Standard Arabic is a simplified Classical Arabic. It is the language of radio, television and the Arab Press, as well as the medium of instruction in all schools and universities. It is universally understood in all Arab countries.

As a student of Arabic in a university you would study Modern Standard Arabic. Its study enables you to readily understand radio and newspapers, but would help only indirectly with your ability to speak dialect.

The ability to converse in Modern Standard Arabic is the mark of an educated man.

Dialects

Arabic dialects are only spoken and can vary greatly from one country to the next. Dialects differ from one another, and from Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, by changes in vocabulary, pronunciation and intonation. Every Arab country has its own dialect as well as sometimes several sub-dialects.

Dialects are characterized by a simplification of syntax and voweling, lacking all the rigidity of "Classical" Arabic as well as including vocabulary items of only local understanding. Modern terms of foreign origin, prohibited in Modern Standard Arabic, are often frequent in Dialect.

Dialects are unwritten languages. A battle rages as to whether dialect may ever be written, even when it's being taught as a foreign language in a western university. Arabs often hesitate in teaching dialect and prefer more proper forms. Yet they themselves speak a dialect all day. Don't ever believe anyone that tells you he speaks Modern Standard Arabic with his friends and family.

In the study of Arabic, remember that language is primarily a spoken thing, especially in countries in which illiteracy is common. No amount of book work can duplicate real conversational practice.

You'll find that your interest in pushing forward with the language may wane from time to time. That's natural, and you shouldn't hesitate to slow

down a bit when it seems as though you just can't memorize another word. But never set aside your work entirely. Stick with it even if it goes slowly. You'll soon see that your contribution and rewards are directly proportional to your ability with the language.

This book assumes that all users have completed an elementary Arabic course of 8 to 10 weeks and have an ability to read and write simple words in Arabic script.

Good luck!

MATERIALS

Regular study requires some type of structure, whether it be from existing materials or those which you prepare youself.

Most existing Arabic materials that are commercially available will be of little help to you in the study of a dialect. Almost all of these materials, in order to appeal to an audience wide enough to be profitable, are based upon Modern Standard Arabic. Their information is useful to the individual more interested in reading and writing than in speaking.

Books of the "teach yourself" and "How to speak Arabic in Five Days" variety are primarily for tourists and rather ethnocentric by nature. They refer often to the manipulation of servants and clerks; not really our cup of tea. They are usually based upon a levant dialect and of little use to students of peninsula dialects. They contain little information not covered in your basic course.

In a few cases there have been some excellent studies done on Arabic dialects, but nothing really outstanding on either Omani or Yemeni dialects. Useful books are listed in the bibliography at the end of this book.

The first material source you should turn to after the end of training is your training course book. The text that you use during training contains far more information than you can master in that period of time. Your training course book contains all the basic ingredients that a good language fluency is based upon. It should be your primary task to master it all.

Continued study after training's end will require that you often prepare study materials tailored to your own needs. This book will outline methods in which to do this.

SPEAKING AND CONVERSATIONAL PRACTICE

The only way to learn to speak an Arabic dialect is by doing exactly that: speaking it. No amount of book review will make the words more fluid on your lips. A tape set can't carry on a conversation. There is no substitution for conversational practice.

Don't be concerned about making mistakes when starting to learn the language. Millions of adult language learners have been in the same situation as you presently are and have managed to pull through and make excellent progress. Arabs consider anyone's attempt to speak their language a compliment. You'll find them helpful and kind.

There are several games that you can play in conversation to derive the greatest benefit from your conversational practice. The first is called "I only speak Arabic" and is perhaps one of the most difficult games to play as a new

speaker of the language. Persistence in the right places usually brings about victory.

As a result of the great tide of English language learners, it is becoming increasingly more difficult, as an English speaker, to learn a foreign tongue. In countries around the world you are assaulted by English greetings even though you may have a familiarity with local equivalents. Everyone knows you're a foreigner. Most foreigners don't speak the local language. In Arabia it is no different.

By the end of your training course you will know more Arabic than ninety percent of the local, English speaking Arabs know of your language. Their knowledge is usually limited to the most basic material. Listen carefully to their speech. Chances are that you know the same material - only can't yet handle it as well. It just takes practice.

Start Arab relationships off on the right foot. Insist politely upon speaking Arabic by explaining that the language is something you want to practice. You might want to tell them something like "when in Rome, do as the Romans do."[1] If you are asked a question in English that you can respond to in Arabic, by all means respond in Arabic. You'll find that after a month or two of study and persistence that your Arabic ability will be so much greater than most Arabs' English that they will then naturally address you in their native tongue. During the initial learning stages you may even want to go so far as to choose those you converse with upon the basis of their familiarity, or lack of it, with the English language. Illiterate types with no foreign language ability often love to talk to foreigners and may take a real interest in helping you with your study.

[1] In peninsula countries this may be expressed as: وقت عربي لازم عربي

There are rules and limits to this game as there are to all games. There may be circumstances under which it may be inappropriate for you to speak Arabic to an Arab. Employers and government officials may prefer to do business with you in English. You should oblige them. You may occasionally meet an Arab with a fluency in English with whom you wish to communicate. Certainly go ahead and speak English with him if his ability with your language is considerably greater than your ability in Arabic.

In certain circumstances (i.e., you've been stopped by a police officer for speeding) it may be best to say not a word in Arabic, perhaps even to feign a complete unfamiliarity with even the most rudimentary terms.

A second game which we can play in conversation involves you trying to persuade Arabs to repeat and use in sentences new words you wish to practice. This game requires that you sometimes innocently and harmlessly mislead someone, or gently change a subject.

Say for example that you've just learned the name for "broom" in Arabic and wish to use it in conversation, perhaps even learning the names of its different parts along the way. The next time you're at the market ask a shopkeeper:

Do you have a broom? عندك مكنسة ؟

even if you aren't actually intent upon buying one. He won't mind your game and will probably respond with something like:

"This one is great. Good bristles." هذا ممتاز، شعر تمام

in which case you will have had the opportunity to use your new word and learn some new, related material too. You can always turn to the shopkeeper and complain that

Its handle is short. يده قصير

Say thanks and then depart.

This is a very important tactic to employ in your conversations with Arabs. Always make an effort to use your new vocabulary words in conversation. You'll be surprised at how much useful new material you'll learn along the way.

As a second example, let's say that you're working with the various usages of اللّي (who, which, whom).

When working with new grammatical structures or verbs you'll first want to record all the examples you've at hand that pertain to its different usages. For instance you may already know اللي from the following sentences:

The house which I saw. البيت اللي شفته

The girl who went to the store. البنت اللي راحت الى السوق

The car which he drove. السيّارة اللي ساقها

Roll over the new word in your mind during the day imagining situations in which it could be used. Then be on the ball for opportunities in which you can actually employ it, like when your neighbor asks:

Where did you buy that cap? من اين اشتريت هذيك الكوفية ؟

Think about it for a second, then reply with something like

From the shop which Mohammed works in. من الدكان اللي محمد يشتغل فيه

Very good!

Be on a constant watch for instances in which you can use your new word. Perhaps you see a friend and his companion one day and stop to greet them. On the following day you see your friend again but without his companion and ask

Where's the one who was with you yesterday? — اين اللي كان معك امس ؟

If you've used the new word correctly, he'll respond without hesitation something like:

He went back to Cairo. — رجع الى القاهرة

And you'll know you're making progress.

An excellent kind of forced learning method is to solicit responses from Arabs that you may well not understand. This will enable you to hear and learn new words related to a subject you wish to breach for the first time.

Say that it's currently presidential election time in the United States and that you've learned from your daily listening to the radio the word for "elections" in Arabic. But unfortunately that's about all you can say about "elections" despite your eagerness to learn more. You wonder what a candidate might be called, or a polling place, or what the verb "to vote" might be. So you decide to explore some.

The next time someone inquires:

How's America? — كيف امريكا ؟

You respond:

Good. There are elections now. طيّب،في انتخابات الحين

There may a short pause while your inquirer recovers from the mild shock of having you respond with something more than just "fine" or "good". Then he will almost certainly go on and say something like:

For What? President? من شان ايش ؟ رئيس ؟

Who will you vote for? لمن بتصوّت ؟

Who will win? من بيفوز؟

And at this point you'll have the opportunity to continue the conversation if you can and learn lots of new vocabulary. From this short exchange you could have learned the Arabic equivalents for "President", "to vote" and "to win" had you not already known them.

Many new words you hear in situations similar to this one you will know by context, others you will have to record and study later. If it should be necessary that you write down a new word, (see the following chapter) be sure that it doesn't interrupt the flow of conversation. What you may understand from a complete conversation is more important than the meaning of a single term.

Don't be shy when playing this game and don't be discouraged if you often understand very little of something which is said to you in response to your "baits". Arabs appreciate your efforts and interest. If you really don't understand something at all, Arabs will often re-phrase and simplify it for you. That's how you learn.

As a final example, visualize yourself having just learned the word for "to receive" in Arabic. You wander over to the local corner store to buy a chocolate bar and the shopkeeper asks:

How are you tonight? كيف حالك الليلة ؟

You might respond, rather cleverly, that you are fine because

استلمت رسالة من اهلي اليوم
You just <u>received</u> a letter from your family today.

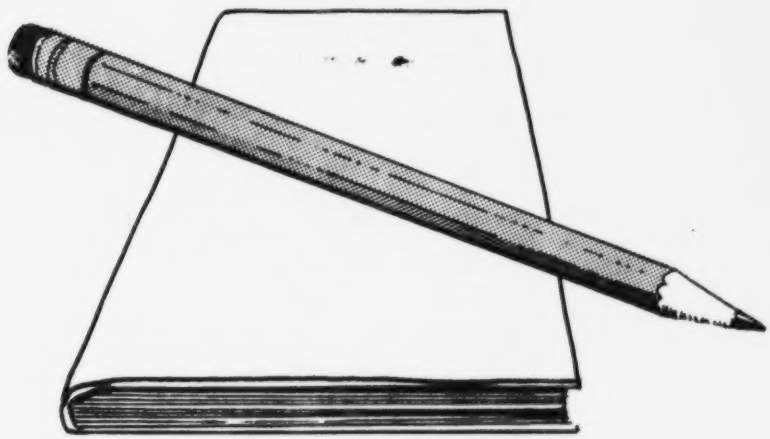
If you happen to know that the shopkeeper has a son working in Abu Dhabi, you might ask whether he has <u>received</u> any news lately from him.

You'll find that this deliberate implementation of new vocabulary items is one of your greatest learning aids. The more you use a word the easier it becomes to identify and use in new contexts.

RECORDING AND HOMEWORK

From your daily exposure to the Arabic language you should be gleaning new words for study.

In the early days of your language learning, before the sounds and patterns of Arabic begin to sound familiar, you'll forget words rapidly if you don't record them. This point can't be over emphasized: you must record new information as quickly and as accurately as possible. Otherwise the information will be lost.



You should always have on your person a small, pocket-size notebook along with a pen with which you can record new words. Always keep them with you. If you leave them at home for a day you know what will happen: you'll

miss 10 new vocabulary entries, including one which was just "that" word that you'd been trying to record for weeks. You won't hear it again for months.

Recording new words on small, loose slips of paper is a waste of time. They are lost or consumed by goats or washed in your pants pockets. You must have a small notebook.

Your entries in the little book should be more than simple, single words. You should, along with the new vocabulary items, record: (1) the place and context in which you heard the word, (2) the nature of the conversation, and (3) example sentences in which the word is used. This information will prove invaluable in trying to reconstruct a conversation and determine a word's meaning.

You should be recording new material each day regardless of how far you have progressed with the language. The acquisition of vocabulary is a very long affair. Don't be discouraged when you see that by the more you learn, the more there still is to learn. If you are really working at the language dilligently, you should be adding between 7 and 10 words a day to your vocabulary. This does not mean that you can turn around and use them fluently the following day, but that you have started to use them in conversation, employing the methods covered in the previous chapter.

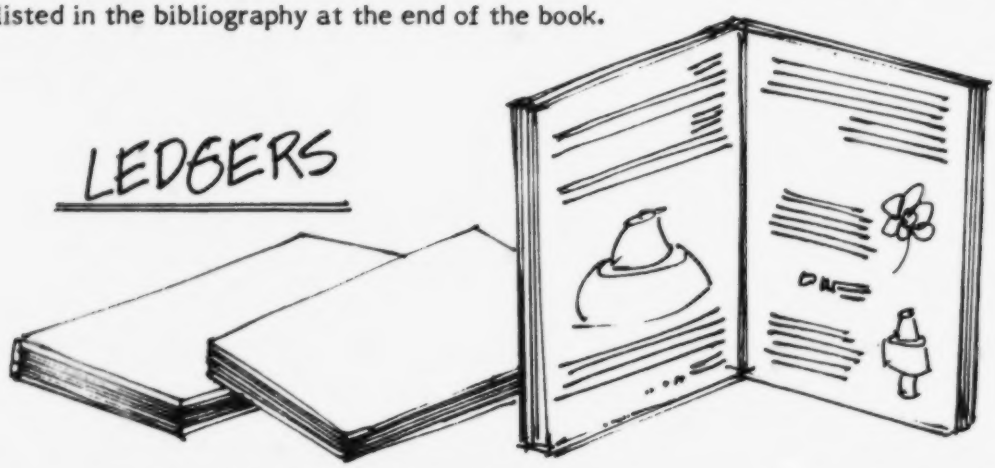
Knowing when to make entries into your book is as important as the entries themselves. Under no circumstances should you allow your "note taking" to interrupt the flow of conversation. To continue listening to a

conversation you don't fully understand, yet follow the trend of, is more beneficial than the recording of a single term. Just try and remember new words until a moment presents itself in which you can unobtrusively scribble them down.

Arabs often offer to write new words down for you when they learn of your interest. They'll argue among themselves about the spelling of slang terms (which of course are not to be written). Let them write words down for you if you like, so long as your notebook doesn't turn into the center of attention.

Arabs are often suspicious of foreigners writing Arabic. It is an unusual skill. You should be discreet in using your book. Don't attract too much attention to yourself.

Recording new words in Arabic script is far superior to employing a transliteration system. Reliance upon a romanized translation system often leads to permanent errors in pronunciation. Arabic sounds are best left unconfused by the Roman alphabet. In the same amount of time it takes to master a transliteration system, you can master the Arabic alphabet. If you are having trouble with the Arabic script, by all means find some help. Arabic writing is easy. There are several books you can work from at home. These are listed in the bibliography at the end of the book.

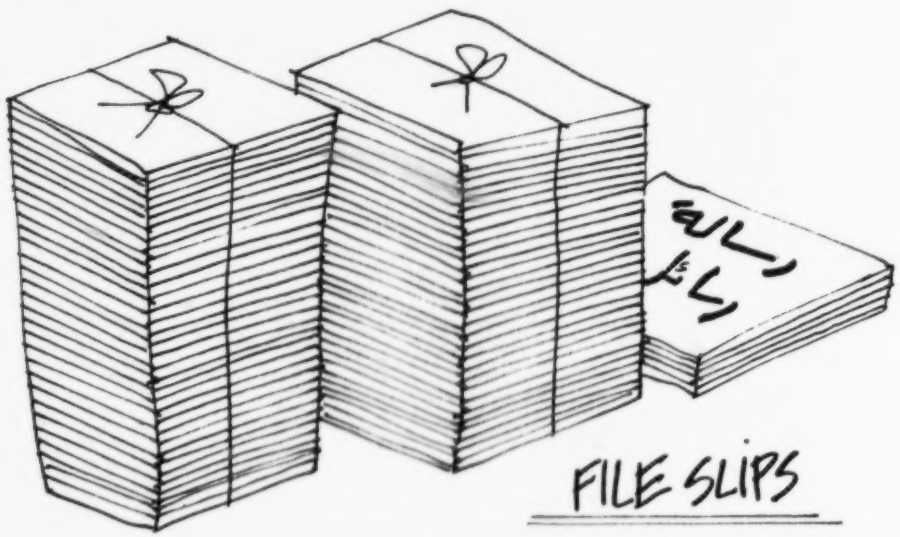


The second step in the recording of new material is a daily review of what you've gathered in the field and a recording of that in the home ledgers.

This re-recording serves to bring the words and situations into mind a second time while they are still fresh. Writing them down helps immeasurably in your future recollection of them. Your ability to recall words rapidly is proportional to the number of times you've used the word previously. One way to use new words by yourself is to write them down several times. Use scraps of paper if you wish. Write down the new words five or six times in different sentences until they seem to flow more easily. Then make a final record in the ledgers.

You can use one, two or three types of ledgers. The first is simply a list, with examples usages, of all the new words you have encountered in chronological order. The second type of ledger lists words alphabetically. The third kind lists new words by subject matter.

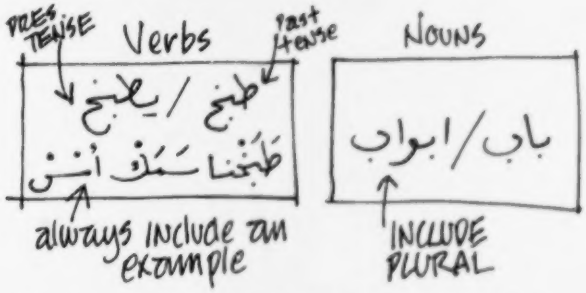
Don't hesitate to scribble and sketch in your ledgers, especially the third type. Pictures are great aids. Your ledgers will be great material for review and can show you how you are progressing with the language.



File slips are one of the most convenient ways in which to systematically review vocabulary. Slips can be made of nearly any flat material, although something slightly stiffer than paper (like playing cards) is easier to use and will last longer.

As you learn a new word record it on a slip. On one side print the Arabic and on the other the English. Print legibly. Review them as often as you feel is necessary, moving the slips into more remote groups as you learn them well. Three groups are generally enough: new vocabulary that you review regularly, vocabulary that you've mastered fairly well but still periodically review, and mastered vocabulary. Even the mastered vocabulary you should sometimes review. Low-frequency word meanings will often escape you. You may sometimes need to move slips in reverse order. Some words you feel you've mastered will return unknown.

Some pointers: when reviewing verbs, always mark the third person past tense form on the file slip (that's the form without any prefix or suffix). Add a few examples of the verb on the same slip. When recording nouns, always be certain to provide the plural form.



The material that you gather during the day from conversations with local Arabs will serve as a very good base upon which to build a lesson set for use with your tutor.

Tutors are only rarely able to structure lesson materials well. They generally lack an understanding of the difficulties experienced by a foreigner attempting to learn their langauge. Don't try to make them accept the responsibility of preparing materials. You'll be the loser. You will necessarily draft many of your own learning materials. This isn't as difficult as it may sound.

Working through your new vocabulary each week with an Arabic-English dictionary, you can build a set of "learning sentences" for use with your

language informant. At the beginning of your study you can base some of your "learning sentences" on material from your course book you haven't yet mastered.

The idea behind these learning sentences is to explore ways in which a new word may be used. Don't hesitate to guess. Your tutor will correct all your attempts. You might start by trying to use new Arabic words in exactly the same manner as you would in English. In this way you can learn which words "translate" in every English sense into Arabic.

Here are some examples

Let's say that you've heard and learned the word قوم /to stand/, in the sentence:

What time did you get up today? الساعة كم قمت اليوم ؟

The first thing that you'd want to do is to use it in several sentences as a verb. Use it in forms you have the most difficulty with.

She got up before the sun. قامت قبل الشمس

He didn't get up this morning. ما قام بالصبح

We get up early every day. نقوم بدري كل يوم

As the second part to the exercise with this word قوم , try using it in some of its different forms as suggested by entries in the Arabic-English dictionary (remembering that these exact forms may require correction by the tutor). You could say things like:

We walked straight. مشينا مستقيم

The value of the car is great. قيمة السيارة كثير

As a final exercise, try using قوم , as you might in some American colloquial:

"I stood up for him" (?!) انا قمت له

"I couldn't stand it" (?!) ما قدرت اقوم به

These direct translations of English to Arabic almost never work,[1] but they allow you the opportunity to find out how to say them correctly. Obtaining a fluency in Arabic requires that you learn the Arabic equivalents for many of these colloquial expressions we use so often in English.

Organize all your "learning sentences" concerning a common root on single or fastened sheets of paper. This material will be part of the tutorial session. Space the material out over the page leaving ample room between sentences for corrections. You should have 15 to 20 good sentences for each session.

[1]Neither of these sentences make the same sense in English as in Arabic. The first translates as "I stood up in honor of him," the second as "I couldn't undertake it (m.)".

READING AND WRITING

A concurrent study of the written language along with the colloquial dialect can pay great dividends. Just the simple ability to read and write words and simple sentences will increase your learning rate considerably, and make it immeasurably easier to run a tutorial session.

For continuing the study of the script there are several good books available that offer a complete review of the principles involved. These are listed in the bibliography. If you should still be having trouble with the script, by all means find some help. Arabic writing is not difficult. It has none of the spelling problems inherent in English.

In countries of the Arabian peninsula the local dialect is often close to the classical language. Many of the words you find in your reading will also be in use in the local dialect although often in slightly modified form.

To continue a study of the reading and writing, you'll want first of all to find some material that suits your level of ability. The following are descriptions of the most popular sources that are readily available.

ARABIC READERS for grade school children are excellent and probably your best bet as a place to start off on the written language by yourself. They offer good variety of subject matter and a wide exposure to different grammatical constructions and usages. Individual stories often exemplify a specific grammatical point. They are often available through book stores, or can always be obtained through the Ministry of Education.

STORIES AND FAIRY TALES are often more difficult than they first appear. Although they are usually written for children, their events and vocabularies are often unreal and difficult: carpets fly, people turn to frogs and bean stalks grow to the sky; difficult situations for new learners of the language. Adult fairy tales, like 1001 Nights, are fascinating reading, but again very slow and difficult for a new learner. Put fairy tales aside until you've completed 2 or 3 of the grade school readers first.

MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS are full of good material but a lot of hard work for the new student. Start by reading the headlines, then move on to short articles of local nature. Finally, you might try and tackle a complicated international piece. You'll find that after some regular study of newspaper articles that the vocabulary is very repetitive. Reading newspapers becomes much easier as you go along.

One benefit to the study of the written language is that many of the answers to questions you have about vocabulary and useages are no farther away than your dictionary. Studying the written language is something you can pursue largely by yourself. Something to fill an empty afternoon hour or two.

There is no easy way to start learning the written language. You simply must dive in with what little knowledge you start with and start plugging away. It requires a dictionary at your side and at least two sharpened pencils in hand.

When reading new material you'll want to do it in three phases. First, read through the piece completely without the aid of a dictionary and see what you can understand. Secondly, read through the piece more slowly searching new words for familiar roots. In this way, you may be able to ascertain the meaning of some of the new words. Thirdly, go through the piece with a pencil lightly marking the definition of each unknown word above itself. This can be a very tiring process, especially when working with difficult material. Sometimes

the word definitions may be clear, but the sentence meaning still uncertain. It just requires time and practice to "see" translations correctly and quickly. If you find yourself having to look up evey word all the time, you're trying to read material that is too difficult. Go back and work with some elementary readers first.

Keep clean, organized records of the material you study. It will provide you with a good source of review as well as material upon which to base a tutorial session. Magazine and newspaper articles can be stapled to the pages of a notebook.

Here's an example headline from a Arabic newspaper.

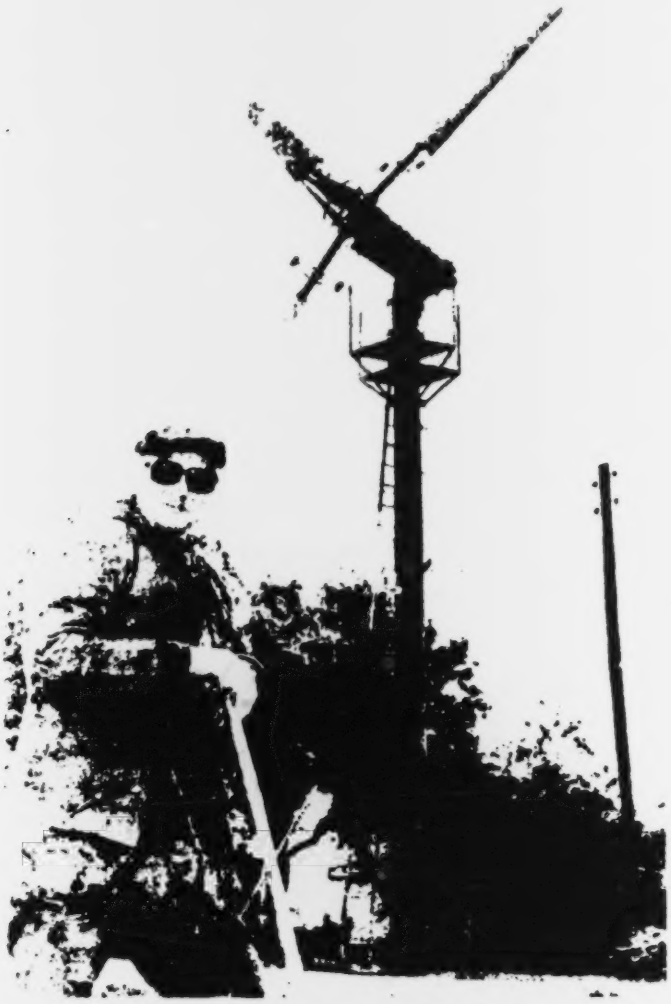
التدخين ليس إلا ضربا"
من القمار على صحة الإنسان

There are only three words in this headline which you wouldn't know from a basic Arabic training course.

الكمين

في صَباحِ يَوْمٍ مِنْ أَيّامِ الخَريفِ ، تَحَوَّلَ الهُدُوءُ ، الّذي كانَ يَسُودُ أَحَدَ الحُقُولِ المَحْصُودِ قَمْحُها ، إِلى ضَجيجٍ وَاضْطِرابٍ . وكانَتِ الأَصْواتُ عالِيَةً جِدًّا ، بِحَيْثُ رَمَتْ زَوْجَةُ الحَطّابِ مِكْنَسَتَها ، وخَرَجَتْ مِنْ بَيْتِها ، لِكَيْ تَرَى سَبَبَ ذلِكَ الضَّجيجِ . وما كادَتْ تَرَى ما حَدَثَ ، حَتّى عادَتْ بِسُرْعَةٍ إِلى كُوخِها ، وأَغْلَقَتْ بابَهُ . كانَ هُنالِكَ جُنْدِيّانِ تابِعانِ لِلسَّيِّدِ غي ، يَجُرّانِ بِخُشُونَةٍ رَجُلًا فَقيرًا في الحَقْلِ المَحْصُودِ . ولَمْ يَكُنِ الجُنْدِيّانِ والرَّجُلُ الفَقيرُ هُمُ الّذينَ أَحْدَثُوا ذلِكَ الضَّجيجَ ، ولكِنَّ سِرْبًا كَبيرًا مِنَ الوَزِّ كانَتْ تُوَقْوِقُ وتَصيحُ بِأَصْواتٍ مُزْعِجَةٍ ، وتَضْرِبُ أَجْنِحَتَها بَعْضَها بِبَعْضٍ ، وتَمُدُّ رِقابَها الطَّوِيلَةَ ، نافِخَةً عَلَى الرَّجُلَيْنِ اللَّذَيْنِ يَجُرّانِ صاحِبَها . وكانَتْ ذُكُورُ الوَزِّ الشَّرِسَةُ تَعَضُّ أَرْجُلَ الجُنْدِيَّيْنِ ، فَيُبْعِدانِها عَنْهُما بِالرَّفْسِ .

This is the opening chapter of a children's story. This particular passage contains some grammatical points not usually covered in training. But it's not difficult to get the gist of the story. Bear in mind that this material is "Standard Arabic" and not dialect.



تمكن المهندس الالماني هيلموت شتلتر من ابتكار مولد للكهرباء يعمل بواسطة الريح ، ونبته في حديقة منزله ، وبات في غنى عن التزود بالكهرباء من المحطة الرئيسية لبلدته . طاقة المولد ٥,٥ كيلووات في الساعة ... وهو اكثر مما يحتاج لشؤون منزله .

A news item. The picture gives away the basic content. Fairly easy to read. This type of stuff is great material for conversation with friends.

From new words and constructions you learn in your reading you'll want to prepare material for use with your tutor. Start with each word you learn and write a few "learning sentences" in the same way you did with your dialect vocabulary. Don't hesitate in developing thoughts with these new words which may be incorrect. Let your tutor be the judge of that. With the aid of a dictionary explore the different forms of a word. Look at our headline again

التدخين ليس إلا ضرباً من القمار على صحة الإنسان

With the aid of a dictionary we have:

تَدَخين	smoking	قِمار	gambling
لَيْس	not, nothing	صَحَة	health
إلاّ	except	إنْسَان	individual
ضَرَبْ	to hit		

Which then translates as: "Smoking is nothing except gambling with a person's health."

From this material you could write several good learning sentences:

Smoking prohibited!	ممنوع التدخين
There's no gambling in America.	ما في قمار في امريكا
Smoking harms your health.	التدخين يضرّ صحتك

These learning sentences may be difficult to visualize by the new learner. Try juxtaposing the position of the new words to form new sentences, especially those more suited to colloquial speech.

الكمين

في صَباحِ يَوْمٍ مِنْ أَيّامِ الخَريفِ ، تَحَوَّلَ الهُدُوءُ ، الّذي كانَ يَسُودُ أَحَدَ الحُقُولِ المَحْصُودِ قَمْحُها ، إِلى ضَجيجٍ وَاضْطِرابٍ . وكانَتِ الأَصْواتُ عالِيَةً جِدًّا ، بِحَيْثُ رَمَتْ زَوْجَةُ الحَطّابِ مِكْنَسَتَها ، وخَرَجَتْ مِنْ بَيْتِها ، لِكَيْ تَرَى سَبَبَ ذلِكَ الضَّجيجِ . وما كادَتْ تَرَى ما حَدَثَ ، حَتّى عادَتْ بِسُرْعَةٍ إِلى كُوخِها ، وأَغْلَقَتْ بابَهُ . كانَ هُنالِكَ جُنْدِيّانِ تابِعانِ لِلسَّيِّدِ غِي ، يَجُرّانِ بِخُشُونَةٍ رَجُلًا فَقيرًا في الحَقْلِ المَحْصُودِ . ولَمْ يَكُنِ الجُنْدِيّانِ والرَّجُلُ الفَقيرُ هُمُ الّذينَ أَحْدَثُوا ذلِكَ الضَّجيجَ ، ولكِنَّ سِرْبًا كَبيرًا مِنَ الوَزِّ كانَتْ تُوَقْوِقُ وتَصيحُ بِأَصْواتٍ مُزْعِجَةٍ ، وتَضْرِبُ أَجْنِحَتَها بَعْضَها بِبَعْضٍ ، وتَمُدُّ رِقابَها الطَّوِيلَةَ ، نافِخَةً عَلَى الرَّجُلَيْنِ اللَّذَيْنِ يَجُرّانِ صاحِبَها . وكانَتْ ذُكُورُ الوَزِّ الشَّرِسَةُ تَعَضُّ أَرْجُلَ الجُنْدِيَّيْنِ ، فَيُبْعِدانِها عَنْهُما بِالرَّفْسِ .

Here's our children's story again. This is a lot of material, more than you could hope to cover thoroughly in a single session. Don't be concerned in the beginning about learning exact details. Find enough definitions in the dictionary so that you get the feel for the story. You'll find that you'll then understand much of the remaining vocabulary by context.

From the vocabulary in this passage you might well write "learning sentences" for a week. Pick the most interesting items to use. Here are some examples:

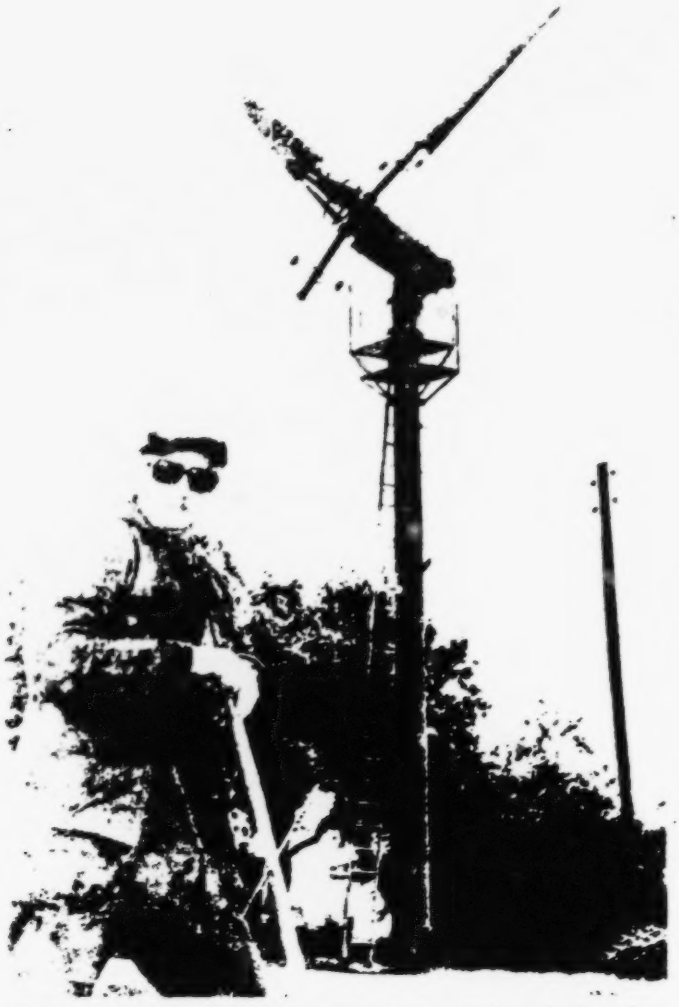
From خريف /autumn/:
Autumn is the best season of the year. الخريف احسن فصل في السنة

From حصد /to harvest/:
We harvested the crops 3 months ago. حصدنا الزراعة من ثلاثة اشهر

From صوت /voice, sound/:
Om Kulthoom's voice is pretty. صوت ام كلثوم جميل

There are several grammatical points in this passage not covered in basic training materials (like the dual form of the verbs and adjectives). These are never employed in dialect. To really master some of these grammatical points requires a fairly serious study of an Arabic grammar. See the bibliography in the back of this book if you're interested.

Here's another look at our newspaper clipping:



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Appropriate technology strikes the Arab press. Here's a wind generator built by a German which supplies more than enough energy for his home. Foreign names

in Arabic can be especially hard to decipher. In this article the inventor's first name is هلموت /Helmut/. The strange order of letters is sometimes a giveaway.

Given from the dictionary that:

طاقة	energy	منزل	house
مولّد	generator	رئيسي	main
بواسطة	by way of	ريح	wind

We can develop some sentences like:

"I want a car that runs by way of wind."	اريد سيّارة تمشي بواسطة الريح
"Where's the main door?"	اين الباب الرئيسي؟
"How powerful is the generator for your house?"	ما هيّ قوة المولّد في بيتكم ؟

Remember to keep all your learning sentences in some kind of order for use with your tutor. Review them occasionally in the same way that you review your file slips. You may well want to record your reading and writing vocabulary in ledgers the same way you do your dialect material. I would recommend keeping separate ledgers and file slips for your written materials so as not to confuse one with the other.

Although vocabulary of the written language often differs from dialect, it can help you learn dialect equivalents. When employing a written word in conversation (especially for the first time) always keep your ears open for a colloquial equal. The case will often be that someone listening to you speak will mumble the colloquial version to himself or a friend, but will hesitate in repeating it to you. So keep your ears open and your book in your pocket!

LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS

Almost everyone has good intentions of finding a tutor to help he or she along with the language after training's end. But just finding a tutor can be a very discouraging task. They are hard to locate.

A good tutor is the only individual who will correct the errors in your speech regularly. This is a very necessary part of language learning.

There is no best place in which to look for a tutor. Neighbors, co-workers and friends are all possible candidates. Often times the tutor may seek you out, interested in establishing a relationship with a foreigner. He may for that reason not be the type you're looking for. Educated Arabs, even of foreign nationality, might be the best to help you with the reading and writing. An illiterate neighbor might be best for assisting you with the colloquial. A co-worker will probably be of the most use in helping you with acquiring professional vocabulary. There is no rule against having more than one tutor. Get help wherever you can find it.

Choosing One (Or Two)

Choosing a tutor can be a very touchy affair. Remember that he can be an asset and liability both. As a general rule, choose someone who you trust, are comfortable with and who will correct your errors constantly.

The tutor need not speak English, in fact some of your best language informants will know not a word. New volunteers tend to gravitate towards those who speak English, intending upon using the tutor much like a dictionary. This produces poor results in the long run.

English speaking Arabs are often out of touch with their own culture and lack an interest in teaching the dialect.

The attitude your tutor has towards his native culture is very important. You should see that his biases and feelings towards his native culture are similar to your own. His teaching examples will color your attitudes. He may instruct you in usages not reflective of your character.

"Modern" Arabs living in their native, primarily illiterate homelands often have a dislike for their own culture and traditional values. They'll often imitate the speech of other Arab groups (like Egyptians or Lebanese) in an effort to disassociate themselves from their native brothers. These types of individuals make the worst language assistants. Their displeasure with what surrounds them will rub off and be detected by others who deal with you. If you wish to communicate with the local, traditional culture, it's best to find a tutor from its ranks, or at the least someone who sympathizes with them.

A tutor need not be educated, although someone with some education may better understand the problems of a foreigner learning his language. Your language informant should be able to read and write well enough to corrrect your errors.

Expatriate Arabs are often interested in tutoring western students. They are capable of teaching the written language, but generally have little knowledge of the local dialect. In some Arab countries certain foreign Arabs are despised for political or cultural reasons. Your association with them could detract from your standing in the community.

If you work in a very specific and limited dialect area, you will want to make sure that your tutor is a native of that locality. There is no substitute for a local native speaker when you're interested in learning very localized terminology.

One of the greatest attributes your tutor can have is reliability. Regular practice is the way in which you'll make good progress. A tutor who comes irregularly is only of limited help. Impress upon the tutor the importance of being punctual and regular.

Working With A Tutor

"Free" lessons or those given in exchange for English lessons are generally not worth your time. They'll not be taken seriously by your tutor.

A tutor that enjoys payment is the best kind. Always insist upon paying for services from the outset. A paid tutor is much more reliable than an unpaid one.

Group lessons? Why complicate things? Unless you really enjoy studying with another individual, take advantage of a personal tutor. A personal tutor can move along at your speed rather than the group's.

Almost all tutors will suffer a tendency to teach you the "high" language. They will often insist upon teaching you classical synonyms for dialect words. This is for two reasons.

Firstly, dialect is never taught in schools. All teaching materials are prepared in the language of Modern Standard Arabic. So there is a tendency when teaching Arabic to only teach proper forms.

Secondly, an ability with Standard Arabic is the mark of an educated man. Your tutor, seeing you as an educated westerner, may be embarrassed and hesitate in teaching you the "illiterate" language. Some type of compromise is usually necessary.

In the end, dialect must win. Although Standard Arabic is universally understood throughout the Arab world, it isn't spoken anywhere. Its knowledge, while a good tool, will not directly enable you to understand a local dialect.

A two-part approach to the tutorial session may be necessary, especially if you are interested in learning both spoken and written forms. You might find it best to have two tutors; one for written Arabic and the other for dialect.

Running The Session

Speak Arabic and see that your tutor speaks up to speed. Don't slow him down. If there is one person around whom you shouldn't at all hesitate to speak Arabic with, it's your language assistant. You must speak to him constantly so that he has ample opportunity to correct your mistakes. If he happens to speak some English, allow him to use it only when it's absolutely necessary. Don't ever let him say something in English that you could just as easily understand in Arabic like "read this" or "take the book". Many tutors, despite all their claims to have your interest in Arabic at heart, will expect to be able to practice their English with you. You should nip this tendency in the bud at the first opportunity. Tell them you're not a teacher and your English is too poor to be of any help to a student.

At the beginning of your sessions with a language informant you'll find it necessary to learn some short phrases to facilitate the lessons like:

How do I say _____ in Arabic?

Repeat please.

Is this correct?

Did I do it correctly?

You will be able to convey most of these to your informant by way of sign language until you learn them properly. Following the first few lessons

List of all the learning phrases that were required during the session that the tutor either had to say in English or you had to act out. Write down their Arabic equivalents and learn them. As you advance to require more sophisticated phrases, continue to commit them to memory. Work on them with your tutor as part of the lesson.

Planning A Lesson

An ideal session runs about one and one-half hours and is well structured. Don't let the session drift aimlessly. You must have the lesson well planned.

There is no hard and fast rule as to what constitutes the best way in which to use a tutor. They are, after all, human beings and not as easily manipulated as a book or tape recorder. If you've developed a good relationship with your tutor there should always be more than enough good material to discuss. Remember: the primary responsibility to develop material and run the session is yours. Don't expect to learn while you passively sit and listen.

Using Your Example Sentences

A primary element in each session with your tutor should be a systematic review of all new material you've encountered since the last lesson, both in your reading and writing and in your spoken work. You've already prepared the material: your "learning sentences."

Carefully go over each sentence with your tutor. As he corrects each one for grammatical errors, read it 3 or 4 times having him correct your pronunciation. Because many of these sentences will be guesses about usages, there will naturally be errors. Discuss what you were trying to say with your tutor until he understands. For each corrected sentence, have the language assistant give you two correct examples. Study them later after the session.

Example:

You might have well have written the "learning sentence":

"I bought it in Abu Dhabi." اشتريته في ابو ذبي

Your instructor would then correct it to read.

"I bought it from Abu Dhabi." اشتريته من ابو ذبي

because in Arabic we buy things من places rather than في them as we do in English. From the corrected usage of من , your instructor might offer as a further example:

"We went out of the house." خرجنا من البيت

In using the dictionary to help you write sentences you may often use words not common in the colloquial dialect. Be sure that your tutor understands he's to speak up and mention this fact when it occurs. If you should, for instance, offer an example sentence such as:

"We walked straight..." مشينا مستقيم

Your language assistant should interject that although this term مستقيم is quite proper, in dialect natives prefer:

in parts of Oman : سيدى

or

in parts of Yemen: ساني

Whenever your tutor offers a more popular term, write it down immediately and incorporate it into your next lesson.

Work through all your example sentences in this manner until you've practiced each one and corrected all errors.

Pictures

One of the second things you would like to accomplish in a tutorial session is to get your tutor to speak extemporaneously about a topic of interest to you. This will provide you with an opportunity to hear and ask questions about native speech in an informal situation. One of the best ways in which to accomplish this is to have the instructor talk about a picture which you have furnished for the occasion.

While impressing upon him the importance of speaking at normal speed and in dialect, have him talk about the picture for a full minute while you record his voice on a tape recorder.

After he has finished speaking, go back over the narrative with the tape recorder stopping at the end of each sentence and repeating. Have the tutor correct your pronunciation. After you've listened to the tape a couple of times, have the tutor write down his narrative for you.

After the session is over, go back over the recording several times for comprehension. Compare his written version to the tape, adding any small words and pauses he may have omitted. Listen to these tapes frequently for practice. You will be amazed at how they "open" your ears to conversation around you. A collection of tapes and accompanying pictures is a great review and study tool.

As a third element in any session with your language instructor, you will have to resort to some direct questions about words whose meanings still elude you. You'll have to simply ask:

"What does _____ mean?

Listen carefully to his response and example usages. Make notes of what he says, or better yet, record it on tape. If you grasp quickly the meaning of a word, respond with some examples of your own. See that the tutor always gives you examples in the form of complete sentences. You might for instance ask him:

"Use this word in a sentence." إستعمل هذي الكلمة في جملة

As a final element in any tutorial session, take some time to just sit and talk with your tutor. You may have cleverly prepared a set of questions to ask him beforehand, or just handle the whole thing off the top of your head. Whatever the case, don't hesitate to try something new. You might want to talk about a new topic you've breached during the week. Say you've learned the verb "to swim". You could easily ask him:

"Do you know how to swim?" تعرف تسبح؟

"Where do you swim?" اين تسبح؟

Listen carefully to him and how he responds to your inqueries. Answer him the best you can. Be certain that your tutor knows to correct your errors.

ARABIC DIALECTS

In the United States there is very little difference between dialects of different portions of the country. Although a simple noun may change from place to place, most variation is limited to relatively small changes in pronunciation and intonation. There is rarely a real communications problem.

This is not the case in the Arab world. For both reasons of isolation from other Arab cultures and exposure to different foreign cultures, Arabic dialects often vary greatly from one another. Often there is so great a difference between dialects that members of different groups would understand very little of each other's speech if they adhered to their local tongues.

Ways In Which Dialects Change

One of the major ways in which dialects differ from one another is by vowelation. Both short and long vowels may differ from one locality to the next. The vowels may lengthen, shorten, disappear or change.

Arabs will often tell you that the short vowels are unimportant in dialect because of the fact that they change so frequently. Arabs tend to hear the roots of their language and not worry so much about short vowelation. They tolerate this variation in the same way we tolerate differences in pronunciation as found between "wash" and "warsh" and "car" and caah".

For the new learner it can be frustrating to learn that two words of slightly different spelling may be completely synonymous. You just have to learn to hear as Arabs do. Listen for the consonants first and the vowels second.

Some examples:

With imperative verb forms the short vowel on the initial alif will often vary from place to place:

اُصْبُرْ is the same as إِصْبُرْ

Also with imperative verb forms, the initial alif may sometimes disappear entirely. You then get words like:

دَخَلْ instead of اُدْخُلْ

or the more or

جَلَسْ proper اِجْلِسْ

The short vowels of conjugated verbs often changes from one place to the next. You may find many variations within any country.

يُسْكُنْ is just as correct as يِسْكَنْ

and

يَدْرُسْ just as correct as يُدْرُسْ

The pronunciation of final long vowels may change from dialect to dialect.

يِتْغَدَّى may be pronounced as يِتْغَدِّي

يِنْسَى may be pronounced as يِنْسِي

A game played around Yemen, Sanaa with final "a" sounds on words involves changing them to يّا . Therefore, we have local terms like:

كذا changing to كذيّا

هنا changing to هنيّا

and in this case an initial vowel changes as well:

اُعْصا changes to اُعْصيّا

In being able to identify words you already know in another dialect, you must practice tuning your ears to reduce words to consonant groups and reduce the importance of vowelation.

Pronunciation Of Letters

Within the Arabian peninsula there are only minor differences in the pronunciation of letters from one area to another. After a few months you won't even be conscious of those differences any longer. Your mind will automatically "translate" them to familiar sounds.

In the Arabian peninsula, the letter

ج

Will often be pronounced as a "g" sound rather than the more proper "j". Both "j" and "g" speakers seem to be evenly scattered over the Arabian peninsula.

In some cases this letter may be pronounced as a "y" at the beginning of a word. In the eastern areas of Oman, the district known as جَعْلان is often pronounced "ya'laan".

ق Will sometimes be pronounced as a "g" sound, but only in those areas where the ج is being pronounced correctly. Some parts of Oman pronounce this letter this way. All of the northern Arabs of Yemen around Sanaa do.

ق Inhabitants of the Arabian Gulf may pronounce this letter as ج as in شرقة (pronounced sharja).

ك Will sometimes be pronounced as a "ch". This is a favorite of desert beduins of Oman. كيف حالك becomes "chayf Haalach". Common in Iraq, Jordan and parts of the Arabian Gulf. Not used in Yemen.

Choice Of Synonym

Beginners tend to make a mountain out of the mile-hill-size synonym situation in Arabic. It can seem at times as though there are three Arabic words for every English term.

In the Arab world different countries and localities often choose words for frequent usage which may only be employed rarely in another dialect area. It's as if the population of New York preferred using the word "desire" instead of "want". They would say things like:

"I desire a candy bar."

or

"I desire to sleep now."

It would sound a bit strange to the foreigner, yet be perfectly understandable to a fluent English speaker. This is exactly what happens in Arabic. Its the basis for endless arguing among Arab groups about what the

"correct" word is. Northern Arabs often label the speech of their less-developed brothers as "illiterate", although their own colloquial versions are often no more correct.

By the three letter root system it is possible to correctly derive names for objects, and express thoughts, in more than a single way. For instance,

> An ashtray can be a طفاية meaning "extinguisher" from the root طفى /to extinguish. Perfectly proper.
>
> Or it can be a منفضة meaning "place of tipping or shaking" from the root نفض /to shake, or tip a cigarette.

and

> Matches can be rendered as either كبريت , meaning "sulphur", or مشخط meaning "strikers"[1] from the root شخط /to scratch.

This is really the beauty of the Arabic language and its root system. With some study and practice you'll be able to readily identify meanings of new words formed in these ways. After Arabic word patterns become more familiar you may even find yourself making your own names for objects.

Popular words change frequently from dialect to dialect. Some words may be localized abbreviations for two or more terms.

The interrogative "What?" may be rendered in Arabic as

ايش ؟ (probably an abbreviation of اي شي؟ /which thing?

شو؟ (probably an abbreviation of ايش هوّ؟ /what is it (m.)?

مو؟ (perhaps an abbreviation of ما هوّ /what is it (m.)?

1. OMANI DIALECT.

And "I want" can be rendered in the Arab world as:

اريد (classical)

ابغى (classical)

اشتي (A Yemani abbreviation of the classical اشتهى /he desired)

عايز (A favorite Egyptian word meaning "needy")

بدي (Jordanian slang)

ابي (Gulf slang)

The INTONATION of speech may differ considerably from place to place as certain syllables and letters are regulary stretched or shortenend. Some dialects will soften the coarser sounds.

In some places of the Arabian peninsula, final vowels are lengthened regularly:

	faTima	would be	FaTimaaa
and	ali	would be	aleeeeeee

In other cases a long final vowel may be shortened.

صحراء Saharaa could be pronounced Sahara صحرى

The different nuances of intonation in speech are too numerous to recount. Long and steady practice is necesssary to really learn to imitate well the intonation of a local dialect.

DIALECT AREAS

Outside Of The Arabian Peninsula

Dialects outside of the Arabian peninsula you will find very different from that which you have learned. Upon arrival in a sister Arab country of more "modern" character you may barely understand a thing the inhabitants say, not even the greetings. You will at that point realize how little you had to complain about concerning "all these differences" on your home dialect turf.

In the levant (Syria, Lebannon, Jordan, Palestine), it at times sounds as though the locals are speaking French, due in no small part to their French heritage. The sharper sounds have been reduced.

The ق is pronounced as a hamza (a clicking sound), therefore:

قريب is "Areeb"

and

تقول ia "ta'ool"

The simple كيف حالك that you've come to love is replaced by

شلونك shaloanak? (a condensation of ايش لونك meaning "what's your color?")

"To want" something in the levant requires that you attach the correct possessive ending to the two letter word بد .

i.e.

you want بدك

she wants بدها

Combined with a Jordanian tendency to pronounce the ك as a "ch", you can get things like :

bidee a'ool lach shay بدي اقول لك شي

(I want to tell you something.)

In several of the more advanced Arab countries there is a complete ban on all foreign words in the language.

A bank isn't a بَنْك , but a مَصْرَف .

A motorcycle isn't a سيكل or موتور , but a دراجة نارية.

But the languages are still laced with words of foreign origins. Turkish terms from the Turkish occupation are numerous:

افندم meaning "friend"

طربوشة meaning "turban"

are just two. As a remnant of its past relationship with England, Egyptians use the term:

متنرفس to render "nervous"

In many places in the levant and North Africa the letters ذ، ث، ظ، ض are pronounced differently than in peninsula countries.

ث is pronounced as a "t" by Lebanese and as "s" by Egyptians.

ض ظ are often pronounced as "z" sounds as in ضكي zaki or ضَيْف zayf.

ذ sometimes pronounced as د.

Peninsula Dialects

The dialects of the Arabian peninsula have preserved more of their classical roots than any others. A native speaker of the Arabian peninsula is easily understood in any Arab country, whereas the opposite, say, an Algerian in Kuwait, would not be. Nevertheless, peninsula dialects are not pure.

Coastal dialects, where the inhabitants have more frequently come into contact with foreigners, often contain many foreign terms. New goods marketed under foreign names often retain those names for lack of any others. For that reason we have:

سندل from the English "sandal"

and

سيكل or موتور from the English "motorcycle".

Indians have contributed much to the dialects of South Arabia. Many modern, household objects, first seen in the hands of a Hindi shopkeeper, have retained their Hindi or "Hinglish" (Hindi-English) names. We have:

بجلي /"biggili" for flashlight from the Indian word for electricity. (Oman dialect).

دوبي /"doobi" for laundry man from the Hindi word of the same meaning. (Common term throughout peninsula)

بلدي /"baldi" for bucket. (Common throughout peninsula)

and from Hinglish we have

املت "omlet" from the name of the egg dish.

Occasional Iraani and Baluchi words are found in the dialects of Oman:

دور بين /"door been" for binoculars from the Iraani "see far".

برابر /"baraaber" for "good" from Baluchi.

باد جير /"baad geer" for "windscoop" from the same name in Iraani.

Foreign Arab groups, often promoted as being more advanced than their peninsula counterparts, are often imitated in speech. Peninsula natives pick up and implement words like كويّس /good, fine and زي (instead of مثل /like, similar) in an attempt to appear more modern. The local term they leave behind is often just as correct as the new one they adopt. This is a new trend in the peninsula which shows no signs of abating.

UNDERSTANDING AMONG DIALECT SPEAKERS

As an Arab moves farther from his native turf he understands what he hears with less clarity. Likewise, others understand less of his speech. As local nouns, adjectives and verbs are replaced by those less familiar, he will come to understand the general nature of a conversation, but not much of its detail. He will often not understand local humor.

As a result, an Arab will remove many local dialect terms from his speech and replace them with others of wider popularity as he moves from his native area. Arabs from other localities will do the same while conversing with him.

This cleaning up of conversation is something dialect speakers do in each country to facilitate understanding. It happens among inhabitants of a single country as well as between those from different countries.

Peasant farmers, when selling produce in regional capitals, will use popular terms for their produce rather than local, village names. A bus driver in a capital city will use a popular term with riders for "sit" rather than something he might use among friends in his native village.

This language of simplified vocabulary is the common denominator of dialects. It is what some call "Modern Standard dialect."

When Arabs of different countries meet the differences between their dialects can be so great that they must resort to Modern Standard Arabic or a common foreign tongue for communication. This is often the case between North Africans and peninsula dwellers.

Many Arabs educated abroad never do learn to communicate literately in their native tongue. When attempting to discuss something beyond the limits of everyday conversation, they may often resort to the language of their university study.

GRAMMAR

One of the main characteristics of the Arabic language is its basis of roots. Almost all roots are triliteral (having three letters). Variations of shade or meaning in the language are achieved by modifying these roots in certain ways. Roots may be modified by varying the vowels or by the addition of certain prefixes, suffixes and internal letters. Word forms derived from common roots will have associated meanings. These groups of words are known as word families. For example:

from the three letter root كتب meaning "to write".
there exists an entire word family of terms associated
to the act of writing.

كتاب means "book" (or something written)

كتابة means "writing" as in "reading and writing."

مكتب means "office" (a place of writing)

مكتوب means "written"

مكتبة is a "library" (a place of written things)

The entire Arabic language is structured in this way. Roots are modified in predictable ways to change root meanings.

Although Arabic is sometimes referred to as being "poor" in verb tenses, it is incredibly rich in these verb forms. Beginners often find these forms troublesome. But once their particular traits and meanings are

understood, they become a great aid to the speedy acquisition of vocabulary. The understanding of word patterns is very important in Arabic.

The derived forms are generally numbered (in Roman numerals) from II upwards. The root form is understood to be form I. The exact number of derived forms is up for debate. Some Arab grammarians count as many as 15 in the classical language although several of these are rare. In colloquial dialects there are 10 in common usage.

Very few roots have all the derived forms from I to X. Some have only one or two while four or five is a good average. There is a good deal of overlapping of meaning between some of the forms despite their written differences. In some cases, root forms will no longer exist while derived forms will still be in use.

The presence of neglected derived forms is a great resource of the Arabic language. Arab grammarians exploit this resource in coining new words to meet modern requirements.

The following is a reference list of the derived forms and their meaning patterns. Bear in mind that these meaning patterns are only approximate and don't apply in every case. Look at the example forms carefully to see exactly what changes have been made in the root model. Listen for examples of each kind in conversation with your friends. A sound knowledge of these derivations can be an incredible aid in the study of the language.

The Ten Forms

Arab grammarians always use the root فعل to exemplify Arabic grammatical points. We'll do the same here. Form I is the root while all the derived forms we refer to as stems.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	Passive Participle	Active Participle	Imperfect	Perfect	
كَتَبَ	NO SET FORM	مَفْعُول	فاعِل	يَفْعَلُ	فَعَلَ	I

Form I is the root form. It has no prefix, suffix or extra internal letters. Examples of Form I verbs include شرب /to drink, جلس /to sit, and فتح /to open. In the present tense the short vowels may change from one dialect area to another.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	Passive Participle	Active Participle	Imperfect	Perfect	
جَرَّبَ	تَفْعِيل تَفْعِلَة	مُفَعَّل	مُفَعِّل	يُفَعِّل	فَعَّل	II

Form II verb stems are just like Form I with a single exception: the middle letter takes a ّ shedda. This effectively doubles the letter. This addition of a ّ shedda serves to intensify the root meaning or make intransitive Form I verbs transitive. Examples of Form II verbs include علّم /to teach and كسّر /to shatter (an intensification of كسر /to break).

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	Passive Participle	Active Participle	IMPERfect	Perfect	
سافر	فَعَال or مُفاعَلة	مُفاعَل	مُفاعِل	يُفاعِل	فاعِل	III

Form III Verbs denote a relation of the action to another person. Form III verbs differ from the root form by the addition of an ا after the first root letter. Examples: راقص /to dance with someone. The root form رقص simply means "to dance." Form III verbs can also denote a meaning of attempting the act of the root meaning as with سابق /trying to proceed, pass or race.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	Passive Participle	Active Participle	IMPERfect	Perfect	
أعلَم	إفعال	مُفعَل	مُفعِل	يُفعِل	أفعَل	IV

Form IV Verbs are very similar in speech to Form I verbs. Form IVs take an initial ا alif in the past tense forms and have slightly different voweling from the root form. Form IVs make intransitive verbs transitive and transitive verbs causitive.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	Passive Participle	Active Participle	IMPERfect	Perfect	
تكلّم	تَفَعُّل	متفعَّل	متفعِّل	يتَفَعَّل	تَفَعَّل	V

Form V Verbs are generally the reflexive of Form II. They are often used when you wish to consider or represent someone or something as having the quality of the root meaning. Forms Vs have an initial ت and a ّ shedda over the second root letter added to the root form.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	Passive Participle	Active Participle	Imperfect	Perfect	
تَعَاوَنَ	تَفَاعُل	مُتَفَاعَل	مُتَفَاعِل	يِتفَاعَل	تَفَاعَل	VI

Form VI Verbs imply the mutual application of an action. They are characterized by the addition of an initial ت and internal ا . If عوّن means "to help", then تعاون means "to help each other" or "cooperate". Also تكاتب /to write to one another.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	PASSIVE PARTICIPLE	ACTIVE PARTICIPLE	IMPERFECT	PERFECT	
إنكَسَرَ	إنفعال	مُنْفَعَل	مُنْفَعِل	يِنْفَعِلْ	إنْفَعَل	VII

Form VII This is the passive in Arabic. With this form you can say things like "it broke" rather than admitting guilt by having to say "I, she or he broke it". Form VIIs take an initial ا and ن . (Note that the alif disappears in the present tense.) Examples إنكسر /it(m.) broke, إنفتح /it opened.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	Passive Participle	Active Participle	IMPERFECT	PERFECT	
إقْتَلَبْ	افتعال	مُفْتَعَلْ	مُفْتَعِل	يِفْتَعِل	إفْتَعَل	VIII

Form VIII Verbs are the reflexive of Form I verbs. They are sometimes used for different twists of meaning. Form VIII verbs add an initial ا and an internal ت to the root forms. Example: إقتلب /to be capsized, from قلب /to flip, turn over.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	PASSIVE PARTICIPLE	ACTIVE PARTICIPLE	IMPERFECT	PERFECT	
إحمرّ	إفعِلال	مُفعَلّ	مُفعِلّ	يَفعَلّ	إفعَلّ	IX

Form IX Verbs are fairly rare. They only apply to the possession or acquisition of bodily defects or colors. Example: إحمرّ /he blushed, turned red.

EXAMPLE	Verbal NOUN	PASSIVE PARTICIPLE	ACTIVE PARTICIPLE	IMPERFECT	PERFECT	
إستَفعَلْ	إستِفعال	مُستَفعَلْ	مُستَفعِلْ	يَستَفعَلْ	إستَفعَلْ	X

Form X Verbs are characterized by the prefixing of three letters إست to the root form. This form can denote any of several meanings. Form Xs can reflect "a search for the root meaning." Example: إستعلم /to inquire, from علم /to know.

In addition to the "Ten Forms" Arabic roots also change in other ways to make certain parts of speech.

The **Noun of Place** is often made by simply prefixing a م to the root form and adhering to a certain voweling pattern:

مَكْتَب office from كتب /to write

مَجْلِس sitting room from جلس /to sit

مَدْرَسَة school from درس /to study

All plurals for these Nouns of Place are made in the same manner; by the addition of an ا after the first root letter and a slight change in short voweling:

مَكَاتِب /offices

مَجَالِس /sitting rooms

مَدَارِس /schools

Nouns of Instrument are often made in a similar way (except they add an internal alif):

مِفْتَاح /key from فتح /to open

مِحْرَاث /plow from حرث /to spade, plow

Their plurals are formed on the model: مفاعيل

So we have

مفاتيح /keys

محاريث /plows

The Name of The Professional may be formed on the model: فعّال

Examples of this type of noun include:

خيّاط /tailor, from خيط /to sew, stitch

نجّار /carpenter, from نجر /to craft

All nouns of this type take sound masculine endings ين .

خيّاطين /tailors

نجّارين /carpenters.

By adding a ة to the end of the Name of The Professional, you either get the name of the female professional or the name of a machine which performs a similar function.

سيّارة /car from سير /to go

خيّاطة /sewing machine from خيط /to sew, stitch

Arabic roots change in other ways besides those listed above. If you're really interested in the finer aspects of the triliteral root system and the Arabic language, see A New Arabic Grammar Of The Written Language by Haywood and Nahmad.

Verb Conjugation

The following charts recount the differences between the different Arabic verb types and illustrate their most important changes in the different tenses and forms.

REGULAR VERBS are those which have a root of three consonants such as كتب /to write, and شرب /to drink. Regular verbs are easy to work with. Their derivations are predictable because of their lack of long vowels. Here are some example conjugations and forms:

ACTIVE FORM I PARTICIPLE	IMPERATIVE M.S.	imperfect	Perfect	root
مُسْتَكْتِبْ	اِكْتُبْ	يِكْتُبْ	كَتَبْ	كتب

Form I regular verbs always taken an initial ا alif in the imperative form. The short vowel on the alif can vary. It is usually a kesra.

HOLLOW VERBS are those which have a long vowel as the middle letter of their root as in شـــوف /to see, and روح /to go. The long vowel will often change or disappear in the different "Ten Forms" and in different conjugations for number and gender. Examples:

FORM X PASSIVE PARTICIPLE	FORM X ACTIVE PARTICIPLE	FORM I ACTIVE PARTICIPLE	1st. & 2nd per. M.S. PAST T.	Imperfect	Perfect	VN.
مُسْتَقال	مُسْتَقيل	قائل	قُلْتْ	يَقول	قال	قَول

See a complete reference grammar for a detailed description as to how Hollow Verbs change in the Ten Forms. A ـِ kesra on a و may change it to a ي . A ـَ fatha may change it to an ا .

DEFECTIVE VERBS are those whose final root letter is a vowel. This final vowel can change, disappear or become a hamza. Example:

FORM X STEM	FORM III verbal noun	FORM III STEM	3rd per. pl. PRES.	Imperfect	Perfect	root
إسْتَرْماء	رَماء (becomes a hamza)	راي	يَرْمو (ي is displaced by و.)	يَرْمي	رَما	رمى

INITIAL WEAK VERBS are those whose initial letter is a long vowel such as وصل /to arrive, and يبس /to dry. This vowel may change or disappear during normal conjugation and in the "Ten Forms". Examples:

FORM II VERB. N.	FORM I PASS. PARTICIPLE	ACTIVE PARTICIPLE	IMP. M.S.	imperfect	perfect	root
إستيقاف ↑ و changed to ي	مَوْقوف	وَاقِف	قِفْ!	يَقِفْ or sometimes يوقف	وَقَفْ	و ق ف

DOUBLED VERBS are those in which the second and third letters of the root are the same. These are written simply as two letters with a ّ shedda above the second letter, i.e., حدّ /to limit and سدّ /to block. Note that this doubled letter will "come apart" into two letters in certain forms. Examples:

FORM II VERB. N.	FORM III STEM	FORM I PAST PARTICIPLE	IMPERFECT	PERFECT	root
إستِدَاد	إستَدّ	مَسْدُود	يَسُدّ	سَدّ	سدّ

All kinds and stems of verbs take the same prefixes and suffixes when conjugated for similar number and gender. For **PRESENT TENSE** verbs we have:

PERSON		PREFIX	SUFFIX	EXAMPLE VERB STEM	CONJUGATION
I	انا	ا	–	شرب	اشرب
You m.s.	إنت	ت	–	رجع	ترجع
You f.s.	إنتِ	ت	ي	استعمل	تستعملي
You m. pl.	انتو	ت	و	غازل	تغازلو
You f. pl.	انتن	ت	ن	فتح	تفتحن
He	هوّ	ي	–	موّل	يموّل
She	هيّ	ت	–	خبّي	تخبي
We	نحن	ن	–	استقبل	نستقبل
They m.	هم	ي	و	عرف	يعرفو (يعرفوا)
They f.	هن	ي	ن	طبخ	يطبخن

PAST TENSE VERBS have no prefixes, but all kinds and stems of verbs take the same suffixes when conjugated for similar number and gender.

CONJUGATION	EXAMPLE VERB STEM	SUFFIX	PREFIX	PERSON	
فتحت	فتح	ت	NONE	I	انا
استمعت	استمع	ت		You m.s.	انتَ
سقتي	ســوق	تي		You f.s.	انت
حملتو	حمّل	تو		You m. pl.	انتو
صفقتن	صفق	تن		You f. pl.	انتن
تغيّر	تغيّر	–		He	هوّ
إشتغلَت	إشتغل	تْ		She	هيّ
فرحنا	فرح	نا		We	نحن
حاولو(ا)	حاول	و		They m.	هم
سافرن	سافر	ن		They f.	هن

ADJECTIVAL ENDINGS

When to use what ending. You have four choices:

Use No Ending.	Whenever you are modifying something masc. sing. i.e., بيت كبير /a big house or رجل شريف /an honest man
Use a ة/ta-marboota	Whenever the adjective modifies: 1. Something feminine singular Ex: سيّارة سريعة /a fast car 2. Any feminine group of objects Ex: سيّارات سريعة /fast cars 3. Any masculine group of objects Ex: بيوت جميلة /beautiful houses
Use ات	Whenever you are modifying a group of women Ex: ممرضات طيّبات /good nurses
Use ين	Whenever you are modifying a group of men Ex: مهندسين شاطرين /smart engineers

NOTE also that by simply attaching the ين / ات ending to an adjective that it is then understood that you are referring to either male or female human beings, i.e., طيّبين /good men, and جميلات /beautiful women.

Arabs may not always be so careful about their adjectival endings. They may frequently and regularly not use the ة /ta-marboota when it would be proper. Remember that the native speaker is always correct. Imitate whatever you hear around you. Use the methods outlined on this page whenever you are in doubt.

DICTIONARIES

It is difficult to find an English-Arabic dictionary that will be of much real value in helping you with a dialect of the Arabian Peninsula. Most will offer definitions from the "classical" language that while understood by the local population, will generally not be close to the colloquial equivalent. Some dictionaries are written in dialect, but almost without exception for Egyptian and Levant dialects. They are of little use to you. Here's an excerpt from a popular English-Arabic dictionary listing the Arabic definitions of "car":

Car,s. عربة 'araba-t (pl. ات -at)

عجلة 'ajala-t

The preferred term for "car" in the peninsula is سيّارة and is not even listed here. One must assume that many other entries are just as useless. The only advantage to these dictionaries is that perhaps your tutor may understand a word you've found and then be able to give you the local equivalent.

As an exception to the above situation is a small dictionary included as part of an Iraqi Arabic course entitled The Spoken Arabic of Iraq. It is fairly good as an aid in the study of any peninsula dialect. The bibliography in this manual contains a brief description of this book.

More useful to the study of local languages are Arabic-English dictionaries for use by English speakers. These dictionaries, although not based on dialect either, enable you to ascertain general and sometimes specific definitions for words you learn in the colloquial. The Hans Wehr Dictionary of The Modern Written Language is one of the most useful study tools you have as a student. It is a wealth of information, if you know how to use it.

How To Use An Arabic-English Dictionary

You must be able to read and write simple Arabic words. Words in Arabic dictionaries are listed by root, requiring that users have a good familiarity with Arabic grammar. In some cases there may be confusion as to what a root may be. You may have to search under more than a single heading. Therefore, in encountering words such as مجلس the user should realize that the م has been added to the root جلس . Likewise you should be able to recognize رخص as the root of ترخيص , and سكن as the root of مسكون.

Once the root has been found, the derivations are written below it. The number of derivations can be large, and finding the corrrect one quickly can be difficult. In modern dictionaries the root form of the verb comes first followed by the vairous derived forms in numerical order (I through X). After the verbs come nouns and adjectives starting with the shortest forms first (those with no added letters). After those come the forms prefixed with م .

As an example, let's look for اقتصادية in the dictionary.

After some exposure to the language you'll be able to readily identify this as an adjecival form of a Form VIII verb stem. The ة and the ي come off the end to give us the Form VIII verbal noun. The ا's and the ت come out to give us the root form which is قصد .

In the dictionary the root قصد will be the first entry. This is **Form I.** Following the root form are all the derived forms listed by their **Roman numerals.** Note that the different derived forms are not exemplified. It's your responsibility to be able to recall the specific form of the various derivations. If you can't recall them easily, print them on a card and tape it to the inside of your dictionary cover.

Not all possible derivations will be listed here. Many derivations whose meanings are apparent will not be included (such as verbal nouns). Sometimes in dialect a word form will be used that is not listed in the dictionary. In these cases you'll almost always be able to ascertain the approximate meaning from the root form.

*Note that Forms II and III don't exist in the written language, although they may in the colloquial dialect.

قصد *qaṣada* i (*qaṣd*) to go or proceed straightaway (ال or ـَ, ـُ to s.o., to s.th.), make a beeline (ال or ـَ, ـُ for), walk up to s.o. or s.th. (ال or ـَ, ـُ); to go to see (لِ, ـُ s.o.), call (ال, ـُ on s.o.); to betake o.s., repair, go (ال, ـَ to a place; لِ, ـُ to s.o.), be headed, be bound (ال, ـَ for a place); to seek, pursue (ال, ـَ s.th.), strive (لِ, ـَ for), aspire (ال, ـَ to), intend, have in mind (ال, ـَ s.th.; من or ب ـَ s.th. with s.th. else); to aim (لِ, ـَ at s.th.); to have in view, contemplate, consider, purpose (ـَ s.th.); to mean, try to say (ـَ ب or من by s.th. s.th.); to adopt a middle course (في in, at); to be economical, frugal, thrifty, provident; to economize, save | قصد قصده (*qaṣdahū*) to walk up to s.o., go toward s.o.; to follow, imitate s.o. IV to induce to go (ال to s.o., to a place; ـُ s.o.); to compose kasidas V to be broken, break; (*eg.*) to be angry (ـُ with s.o.), be mad (ـُ at s.o.) VII to be broken, break VIII to adopt a middle course (في in, at; بين between); to assume a mediatory position (بين between), act as mediator; to be economical, frugal, thrifty, provident, economize (في with); to save (ـَ money, etc.); to compose kasidas

قصد *qaṣd* endeavor, aspiration, intention, intent; design, purpose, resolution; object, goal, aim, end; frugality; thrift, economy | قصدا *qaṣdan*, عن قصد intentionally, purposely, advisedly, on purpose; deliberately; عن غير قصد unintentionally, inadvertently; حسن القصد *ḥusn al-q.* good intention; سوء القصد *sūʾ al-q.* evil intention هو قصدك (*qaṣdaka*, *qaṣduka*) he is in front of you, before you, opposite you

قصدي *qaṣdī* intentional; intended

قصاد *quṣād* (prep.) in front of, before, opposite (*eg.*)

قصيد *qaṣīd* aspired, desired, aimed at, intended; faultless, without defects (of a poem); also = قصيدة | بيت القصيد *bait al-q.* (the essential, principal verse of the kasida, i.e.) the main point, the principal part, the essence, the core, the gist, the best, the hit, the climax of s.th., that which stands out from the rest, the right thing

قصيدة *qaṣīda* pl. قصائد *qaṣāʾid*[a] kasida, an ancient Arabic poem having, as a rule, a rigid tripartite structure | بيت القصيدة = بيت القصيد, see under قصيد

اقصد *aqṣad*[a] directer, directest

Since the word we're looking for is rather long (اقتصادية), and from a fairly high numbered derived form, it should be somewhere near the end of the listing.

And here it is. (just missing the ة because it isn't modifying anything feminine here in the dictionary).

مقصد *maqṣid* pl. مقاصد *maqāṣid*³ (place of) destination; intention, intent; design, purpose, resolution; object, goal, aim, end; sense, meaning, import, purport, significance | سيّ المقاصد *sayyi' al-m.* malevolent, malicious

اقتصاد *iqtiṣād* saving, economization, retrenchment; thriftiness, thrift, providence; economy | علم الاقتصاد *'ilm al-iqt.*, الاقتصاد السياسي (علم) *(siyāsi)* economics, political economy; اقتصادا في الوقت *iqtiṣādan fi l-waqt* in order to save time

اقتصادي *iqtiṣādi* economical; saving, thrifty, provident; economic; economist, political economist; الاقتصاديات the economy

قاصد *qāṣid* direct, straight (way); easy, smooth, pleasant, short (of travel) | قاصد رسول *(rasūli)* (pl. قصاد *quṣṣād*) apostolic delegate

قصادة رسولية *qiṣāda rasūliya* papal legation

مقصود *maqṣūd* aimed at, intended; intentional, designed, deliberate; meant

Remember that when using dictionaries that the vocabulary is generally that which would be used only in the written language. Be careful in taking words from the dictionary and employing them directly in speech. You'll want to check all words from this source with your tutor first. He'll tell you whether they're correct in the local dialect or not.

On the other hand, the dictionary definition of a word you've heard used in the colloquial is in almost all cases absolutely correct.

Be sure to read the introduction in the Hans Wehr dictionary. It includes a key to the transliteration system. This dictionary, unfortunately, does not include short vowels in its Arabic script.

SOME FINAL WORDS

A Fluency

A fluency as defined by the Educational Testing Service is a complete and educated ability with all facets of the language. This means that anyone actually "fluent" has the ability to converse on modern political topics, discuss energy problems and do simple mathematics. The fallacy of this definition is, of course, that it excludes many native-born illiterates from the ranks of "fluent" speakers of which they certainly are members.

As a volunteer you may well spend most of your time associating with those not entirely literate. You will become fluent in the areas they discuss (if you stick with it), but still never really be considered "fluent" by the Educational Testing Services's standards unless you have an enlightened and educated ability with the language. Don't worry about the test. It isn't really able to test you for ability in the local dialect. At best, it's a measure of how closely your speech approximates "Standard Arabic". A battle continually rages about this problem with the test.

Bear in mind that understanding among different Arab groups is not like that which you experience in English. Dialect differences are enough that they impair perfect understanding. When an Egyptian from Cairo meets an illiterate coastal dweller from Basra there are very real communication problems. They manage to understand each other by understanding root concepts rather than specific meanings.

So in your dealings with Arabs from outside of your country, don't be discouraged if you find them difficult to understand.

Learning Problems

The greatest learning problem that beginners are plagued by is a hesitation to speak for fear of saying something incorrectly. Simply put this

fear aside. You can go nowhere with the language until you've decided that you are going to speak. Arabs love foreigners who make attempts with their language. Don't be afraid to open your mouth.

After you've made the commitment to learn the language, there are several pitfalls to watch for. Here are a few.

1. Don't get in the habit of just learning "words". Words out of context do you little good. Insist upon learning material in a context and in complete sentences.

2. Avoid the tendency to learn only nouns without verbs to go along with them. It's very easy to be taught nouns; the teacher simply points and speaks. Verbs are not so easy. Insist upon lots of examples.

3. When learning nouns always learn the plural form along with the singular. And remember that plurals in Arabic are only employed between 3 and 10.

4. Watch yourself closely with verbs to see that you're using them correctly. Don't let yourself degenerate into saying things like "inta rooH" when you should be saying "tarooH." Some people have a tendency to do this because it is more English-like.

You should constantly be listening to yourself speak and trying to correct your speech from what you know is correct. If an Arab should rephrase something you say to him, make a note of his variation and employ it when possible at another time. Constantly be "cleaning-up" and modifying your speech. Don't be blind to local synonyms. It will often be the case that you may learn a certain word in training which won't be in common use in your dialect area. For instance, أكثر /more, may be rendered in some areas as أزيد , or زائد . New learners will often hold onto the original terms they learn like a life preserver, refusing to hear new, colloquial versions around them. You must keep your ears open.

Be careful that you don't over-use certain vocabulary items. We are so polite in English that we preface almost all requests with either "please...." or "could you.....", whereas an Arab may simply demand it. We have a tendency to over use Arabic equivalents of "please". Arabs only use them when they speak with special kindness. Also be on guard not to over use صديق /friend and ممكن/maybe. These seem to be big favorites with volunteers at the moment. So many foreigners over use them that children now mock foreigners by employing them.

ACCCUMULATING VOCABULARY is a very long road. Fight discouragement. You'll find that learning professional material will be the least of your worries in the long run. You'll have more than ample time to practice professional terms in the course of your job. Your ability with them will depend heavily upon your relationship with your co-workers. The more you talk with them, the more you will learn. You might pick an especially promising one to approach about some extra, after hours help. If you use a word list to study professional vocabulary, go over it carefully with a co-worker to check the accuracy of the terms and your pronunciation of them.

Avoid the tendency to become localized by making it part of your study routine to associate with different types of people and talk about varying topics. You must make an effort to be well-rounded. Your natural tendency will be to become most fluent in only a small sphere relevant to your work.

Don't evaluate your progress by the people you see each day. Many foreigners living in Arabia have been known to claim that the inhabitants of a neighboring village "speak an entirely different dialect." When the truth is that the inhabitants of that neighboring village simply didn't understand their variety of the Arabic language. I once knew an individual whose Arabic was only understood within a 200 foot radius of his residence. He claimed everyone else "speaks a different dialect". Judge your progress by your ability to converse with those whom you haven't met before.

If you really apply yourself during your two years of volunteer service, you can develop a good fluency with the language. But you must work at it continually. Your ability with the language will be proportional to the amount of time you spend conversing with Arabs.

You must make it part of your study routine to simply sit, listen and participate in Arabic conversations. Assign yourself many hours each week of "talking time" outside of your work situation in which you will attend a local hang-out or friend's house and simply talk.

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dictionaries: English-Arabic

Hans Wehr, A Dictionary of the Modern Written Language
By far the best English-Arabic dictionary available of its kind. A must for any student of Arabic. Incredibly thorough. Available in both hardback and paper.

Dictionaries: Arabic-English

The Oxford English-Arabic Dictionary of Current Useage.
If you really must have an English-Arabic dictionary, this is a good choice. Remember that this dictionary is of the written language. It is nicely organized and provides example useages. Hardback.

The Al-mawrid dictionary is also fairly good. It's very popular and fairly thorough. Hardback.

Books On Dialects Near Peninsular

Qafisheh: Gulf Arabic. We all wish someone would have done a book like this on Omani or Yemeni dialects. Nicely orgranized. Good drills. Much of this material is similar to Omani Arabic.

Van Eyck: The Spoken Arabic of Iraq. An excellent book on Iraqi dialect by a missionary who spent his life there. Very well written. Contains a complete grammatical section and a very useful colloquial dictionary in the back. Word definitions in the dictionary are often very close to correct forms in peninsula countries. A good book for any student of peninsular Arabic.

Grammar and The Written Language

Hayward and Nahmad: A New Grammar of the Written Language. The best grammar available for the beginning student. Very thorough. Vocabulary of 4000 words. Excellent for those really interested in going ahead with the reading and writing.

H. M. Nahmad: From The Arabic Press. For the student of reading and writing. Reprints of assorted newspaper articles translated on the facing page. Good.

University of Michigan, Center for Near Eastern and African studies, publishes a number of Arabic language books. Their famous Elementary Modern Standard Arabic is a widely used introductory text. They also have several Continued Arabic Readers for the more advanced student. These are reprints of articles from the Arabic press.

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